(b) if so, what is Government's reaction thereto ?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) it has been decided by the Government that Vayudoot should be merged with Indian Airlines instead of retaining the form of joint ownership by Indian Airlines and Air India. Pending completion of the legal formalities required for merger, Vayudoot continues to be a company. A committee has been constituted by the Board of Directors of Vayudoot to look into the demands of the employees and submit suitable recommendations. The hunger strike has since been called off.

Recruitment in Tourism Sector

928. SHRI SHANTI TYAGI : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state :

(a) the approximate number of people employed in the tourism sector at present ;

(b) whether Government have planned to provide direct and indirect employment to about 30 million people by the end of the century ;

(c) if so, the details thereof ;

(d) whether there are persistent demands from the Eastern and North-eastern States to open up more areas for tourism ; and

(e) if so, the reaction of Government in this regard.

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD) : (a) to (c) Tourism Sector is at present employing, directly and indirectly, between 13 to 14 million persons. National Action Plan for Tourism presented to parliament on 5th May 1992 envisages that this figure would be doubled by end of the century.

(d) and (e) It is primarily the responsibility of the State Governments to open up new areas for tourism. However proposals from the concerned State Governments for the relaxation of Restricted Area Permits (RAP) and Protected Area Permits (PAP) are being considered by the Home Ministry from time to time and appropriate decisions taken.

Construction of New Air Traffic Control Tower

929. SHRI S. MADHAVAN : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state ;

(a) whether a project report was prepared for constructing a new Air Traffic Control Tower-cum Technical block, at Madras ;

(b) if so, what are the details of this project ; and

(c) the steps taken to implement this project ?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD) : (a) to (c) The National Airports Authority has a plan to construct a new Air Traffic Control Tower-cum-Technical block at Madras. The land for this has been taken over by the National Airports Authority. The conceptual plans are under preparation.

वैष्णों देवी मंदिर जाने वाले तीर्थ यात्री

939. श्री शंकर दयाल सिंह : क्या नागर विमानन और पर्यटन मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि :

(क) जनवरी से नवम्बर, 1993 के दौरान कितने तीर्थयात्रियों ने वैष्णों देवी मन्दिर की यात्रा की ;

(ख) समाचार पत्रों में छपी, इस आशय की रिपोर्टों में कि पवित्र स्थान पर समुचित सुविधाओं की अनुपलब्धता के कारण तीर्थयात्रियों की संख्या में कमी हुई है, पर सरकार की क्या प्रतिक्रिया है; और

(ग) क्या वैष्णों देवी मन्दिर जाने वाले तीर्थयात्रियों से किसी प्रकार का शुल्क वसूल